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New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 39

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/254)

Note by the Secretary-General on proposed revisions to programme 8 of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005: United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/58/83)

Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/58/16, chapter III, section B, programme 8; chapter IV, section B)

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/352)

The President: As members are aware, this is the first time the Assembly is considering this new item, which consolidates items that in the past had been discussed separately in plenary meeting in the General Assembly. The purpose of this consolidation is to allow for a comprehensive, yet focused, approach to the debate on this most important issue.

In view of the wide interest in this critical topic, I am also pleased that we are having this debate early in the session.

With regard to sub-item (a) of agenda item 39, members will recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2003, the General Assembly decided that, as part of its consideration of this agenda item, the Assembly would review the recommendations by the Committee for Programme and Coordination contained in document A/58/16, specifically in chapter III, section B, programme 8, and in chapter IV, section B of that document, as well as document A/58/83, which pertain to United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The Assembly decided that all relevant comments regarding these recommendations would be transmitted to the Fifth Committee prior to the Committee's consideration of the proposed medium-term plan and its revisions, and of the recommendations contained in the section entitled "Evaluation" of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker on my list, I should like to inform members that, in a letter dated 10 October 2003 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States for

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the month of October, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting statements by the Observer of the Holy See in the debates on agenda item 39, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support"; agenda item 40, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance"; agenda item 44, entitled "Culture of peace"; and agenda item 48, entitled "Fifty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear statements by the Observer of the Holy See in the debates on agenda items 39, 40, 44 and 48?

It was so decided.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique, speaking on behalf of the African Union.

Mr. Simão (Mozambique): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, I am pleased once again to congratulate you upon your election as President of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Under your able leadership, the General Assembly is making significant progress in tackling the various items in its agenda, and I am sure of a successful outcome of our work. You can therefore rest assured of our continued support and cooperation as you lead us over the next few months.

Today's debate is crucial to the future of Africa. Both the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa remain at the top of our agenda, both in Africa and at the international level. I am pleased that at long last we have all agreed on the need to address these issues together, as both development and conflict issues are two faces of the same coin, insofar as Africa is concerned.

Today, the African peoples are firmly engaged in making Africa a continent of hope. We are striving to achieve peace, stability and socio-economic development, while seeking to build strong foundations for democracy and good governance and to create better living conditions for our peoples.

In order to address these challenges, Africa has effectively seized control of her destiny and presented a visionary course of action, embodied in the creation of the African Union, as a means to provide the necessary institutional framework and political leadership.

NEPAD is an initiative that is led, owned and managed by the African Union. It constitutes a serious commitment to addressing the aspirations of the continent and its peoples. NEPAD, as our comprehensive development strategy, is key for the implementation of our vision for a better Africa.

After many years of efforts devoted to political emancipation, we have now embarked on a two-fold strategy. On the one hand, we are determined to ensure that conflicts, which have been ravaging our continent, can soon be an issue of the past. On the other hand, we are committed to ensuring that Africa takes its rightful place in the community of nations by embarking on a steady pattern of sustainable development, through the implementation of NEPAD.

It was with this ultimate goal in mind that the African Union met in Maputo to discuss the future of Africa and agree on important decisions that will lay the foundations of the African Union and contribute to an effective implementation of NEPAD. We therefore view this meeting of the General Assembly as an excellent opportunity to take stock of our common resolve to make NEPAD a tangible reality with benefits for Africa and, indeed, for the world at large.

We in Africa believe that, with the successful implementation of NEPAD, our continent will cease to be a burden and a permanent source of concern for the international community — due to violent conflicts, endemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, famine and the negative impact of natural disasters — and become an effective partner in the international arena.

One of the main pillars of NEPAD is the achievement and maintenance of peace, stability and security, widely regarded as prerequisites for an African renaissance and development. To this end, we are creating three fundamental institutions, in addition to the Commission of the African Union, in order for this vision to flourish.

The first one is the Peace and Security Council, an organ of the African Union for conflict prevention, management and resolution. The second is the Pan-African Parliament, a tool to ensure the full participation of the African peoples in the development and

economic integration of the continent. The third is the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, an advisory body composed of various social and professional groups of member States of the African Union, to ensure an effective participation of African civil society in the affairs of the Union.

Our efforts today are geared towards putting these three fundamental institutions in place, as soon as possible, to pave the way for NEPAD implementation.

The establishment of the short-term Action Plan, containing high priority projects in the areas of energy, transport, water and sanitation, information technology and health and education, is an important step forward. We are also making progress in producing the medium- to long-term Infrastructure Action Plan.

Furthermore, a Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Plan was jointly developed with the Food and Agriculture Organization, with the objective of addressing the current food crisis in Africa and laying the groundwork for the agricultural development of the continent.

Since the signing of the Constitutive Act of the African Union two years ago, we have placed emphasis on creating the institutional framework for overseeing the implementation of NEPAD at the regional level, integrating NEPAD priorities into our national development programmes and creating institutions to manage it, as a means of bringing about coherence in NEPAD matters within our own Governments.

At the same time, the African Peer Review Mechanism is taking shape, with an increasing number of member States of the African Union acceding to it. The operational structure of the Mechanism has been established, including the panel of eminent persons, and soon we will have an evaluation of the first two countries that are volunteering to be reviewed under this Mechanism.

In promoting NEPAD, we should be careful not to project it as something to come in the future. NEPAD, yes, is still in its infancy, but it is a sound and visible reality in Africa today. For example, the ongoing regional projects and many others still in the pipeline illustrate NEPAD in action. Similarly, the ongoing renewed efforts for conflict prevention, resolution and management are clear examples of NEPAD in action.

To this end, our feeling is that these efforts are having positive results in the overall area of conflicts. In fact, there are no new conflicts on our continent, and even those that now exist are a combination of either old conflicts which have not been resolved properly or seemingly new ones that can be traced back to the old ones. Overall, the balance in settling conflicts is positive, as illustrated by many positive examples underway in Africa, including Angola, Sierra Leone, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Burundi, all of which are on a steady path to full stability.

As for Burundi, President Chissano of Mozambique, in his address to the General Assembly last month, appealed to the Security Council to adopt a resolution formally endorsing the African Mission in Burundi and to take the necessary measures to provide political, financial and logistical support to this operation. The recent signing of an agreement in Pretoria between the Government of Burundi and the CNDD-FDD has more than vindicated the President's appeal for action by the Council.

These important developments clearly show that Africa is on the right track towards creating the necessary conditions for the successful implementation of NEPAD. Despite the ownership and leadership of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and despite the ongoing African initiatives for conflict prevention, management and resolution, the role of the international community is critical to a successful outcome of the two issues.

We encourage the United Nations to continue to concentrate its efforts in support of NEPAD. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa should be given the necessary support, in order to enable it to undertake its responsibilities.

We also encourage our development partners to live up to their commitments to Africa and to continue to assist NEPAD in its actions. For NEPAD to be successful it is essential that these partners support us in a coherent, predictable and sustainable manner, individually or within financial and trade institutions.

We in Africa will continue to shoulder our responsibilities, ensuring that our resolve and leadership to create a better future for the continent remain unabated.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia,

Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, and the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union sees today's debate as a great opportunity to focus the attention of the fifty-eighth General Assembly on African issues. We wish to take this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to the social and economic development of Africa, which remains, to use the words of the European Union Council of Ministers, our "privileged partner".

As we are all aware, peace and development are closely related, especially in the case of Africa. We welcome this year's new approach of addressing both issues under a single agenda item centred on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which has been adopted by African Heads of State as the development programme of the African Union. We also welcome the Secretary-General's reports prepared under the supervision of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, whose conclusions and recommendations we fully share and whose implementation we are ready to support. In particular, we commend the quality of the NEPAD report, outlining the challenges and constraints facing the African countries, the international community and the United Nations system.

The European Union has supported the NEPAD initiative from the beginning. We share the vision on which it is grounded, according to which Africa's development — considered as vital to Africans as to the entire world — must be framed in a partnership between the more developed countries and the African countries, where the latter have the primary responsibility in establishing the conditions for sustainable economic and social development and attracting private investments. Those conditions include improving governance, fighting corruption and enhancing transparency and the rule of law. NEPAD also rightly emphasizes the private sector's role in Africa as a means to help fully integrate the continent into the process of economic globalization.

I wish to reiterate the European Union's full support for the basic principles and political priorities addressed by NEPAD, which coincide with the values and objectives of the European Union external relations policy. The sectoral and thematic priorities of NEPAD are the same as those defined in the 2000 Cairo Plan of Action, adopted within the Europe-Africa dialogue. We believe that the African Union decision on the integration of NEPAD into the African Union will allow us to reinforce our dialogue with Africa on a broad scope of issues. We look forward to further deepening this dialogue at the first meeting of the Forum for the Partnership with Africa, organized by France and scheduled for 10 November 2003.

In this regard, we applaud the progress made by African countries in implementing NEPAD, particularly the establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism. We hope that other African countries will join the 16 States that have acceded to it as of today, and we encourage them to start applying the Mechanism, as planned, by the end of the year. Drawing on the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, further efforts are also needed to integrate NEPAD goals and priorities into national, subregional and continental development plans; foster cooperation between the NEPAD Implementation Committee and the regional economic communities; generate popular support for NEPAD among the African people and mobilize domestic resources. In this context, the European Union would also like to underline the importance of a gender perspective.

The resolve of the African countries will have to be matched by the commitment of the more developed countries to support Africa — in a spirit of genuine partnership — by substantially enhancing the flow of resources and their effectiveness to the continent.

I would like to recall the collective European Union financial commitment, which was defined at the European Union Summit in Barcelona in March 2002, in the context of the preparations for the International Conference on Financing for Development at Monterrey, namely, to bring official development aid to 0.39 per cent of gross national income by 2006, as a first significant step towards the United Nations goal of 0.7 per cent. The European Union and its member States are respecting this schedule and are already providing almost half of all current development assistance to Africa.

The European Union and its member States have been at the forefront of the international community's cooperation with Africa in many areas. Given the establishment of NEPAD and the developments that have occurred within the African Union, the European Union now faces a new challenge: how to best integrate the pan-African dimension into its cooperation programmes.

The full version of my statement, which has been distributed, provides more information on some of the

concrete actions undertaken by the European Union in the key areas of health, debt and trade.

Regarding trade, the European Union recognizes the importance of cotton for the development of a number of African countries and understands the need for urgent action to address trade distortion in this market.

In response to the cotton initiative in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Commission of the European Union has proposed a constructive solution to address trade aspects linked to the depressed prices of cotton in the world market. It had been proposed to bind that solution in the WTO, but this has been postponed until a round is successfully concluded.

The European Union expresses its deep regret over the failure of the Cancún Conference. We remain convinced that a growing liberalization of world trade, together with development cooperation activities, can play a crucial role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This is why the European Union feels that it is important to continue negotiations in the WTO framework as soon as all the parties are ready to participate again. All parties should demonstrate the determination and flexibility needed to honour the commitments enshrined in the Doha Development Agenda.

Today's meeting is also devoted to the promotion of lasting peace in Africa. Indeed, this is the first goal of the NEPAD Initiative, which rightly links development and stability. Our main focus must be on the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. According to the established position of the European Union, our contribution to conflict prevention and management is to be made through the strengthening of African capacities, including support for regional and subregional organizations and civil society.

There have been important developments in this area. At its Durban Summit in July 2002, the African Union endorsed the Protocol for the establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council, which will be the ruling organ of an African peace and security mechanism, including an African stand-by force. We hope that the number of ratifications required for the Protocol to enter into force can soon be reached.

In the meantime, at the African Union Summit in Maputo last July, the European Commission made an innovative proposal: to establish an African peace support operation facility in support of African peace operations, including the soon-to-be-launched African Union peace and security mechanism. This proposal is currently being developed in Brussels. It recognizes that there is no development without peace and aims to enlarge the range of aid intervention to include support for African-run peacekeeping operations.

We expect other donors to contribute to the establishment of the African peace and security mechanism, following the adoption at the Group of Eight Summit in Evian of a joint plan for strengthening African capacities to undertake peace support operations. This plan sets forth the ambitious goal of helping African countries to create, by 2010, a stand-by peace force capable of conducting peacekeeping operations and consistent with the African ownership of peace and security issues.

The creation of an African stand-by force will deter conflicts on the continent and supplement strong and effective cooperation between the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union. This trilateral cooperation must encompass both conflict prevention and aid. This was one of the main conclusions of the seminar that the European Union presidency organized in Rome, on 28 and 29 July, on conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa, which was attended by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa, Professor Gambari, among others, and also by qualified representatives of African civil society, who, we believe, play a crucial role.

The lessons learned from past experience prove that when the European Union, the United Nations and African countries act in a coherent and consistent manner, they can make a significant impact on peace, development and security. The most recent example was the European Union-led Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The European Union-United Nations cooperation agreement on crisis management, signed in New York two weeks ago, will create further opportunities to demonstrate the European Union's commitment.

The European Union has much to offer Africa in terms of building capacity in conflict prevention, management and resolution, including peacekeeping and cross-cutting issues such as control of small arms and light weapons. While financial resources form the central pillar, there is also an important technical capacity-building and skills transfer that the European

Union can offer. We intend to foster discussion with our African partners on this sensitive issue within the framework of the ongoing Europe-Africa dialogue established at the Cairo Summit in April 2000. As was confirmed at the Ouagadougou ministerial conference in November last year, Europe wishes to make the strategic framework provided by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union, the heart of its political dialogue with Africa.

Ensuring Africa's inclusion in world advancement is a European Union priority. We are confident that this challenge can be achieved through continuing progress in the implementation of NEPAD and increasing support from the international community. While the European Union will pursue this objective in the framework of its ongoing dialogue with Africa, we also expect the United Nations to play an important role in fostering the partnership between the developed world and the African continent. I wish to pledge the European Union's full support for initiatives undertaken in this respect, and I wish the Special Adviser for Africa, Professor Gambari, every success in his important role.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): Norway has a strong commitment to Africa. We feel that there are many positive signs coming from the continent. We will continue our partnership with many African States and we will engage even deeper with African regional and subregional organizations.

Norway recognizes the important steps that are currently being taken by leaders on the African continent. With the development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the new African Union, African leaders themselves are clearly taking charge of development on the continent. NEPAD is an initiative that is led, owned and managed by the African Union. I reaffirm Norway's support to the principles and political priorities in the NEPAD plan of action. We are encouraged by the progress made in establishing the African Peer Review Mechanism, and look forward to its implementation.

Norway commends the new Office of the Special Adviser for Africa for its efforts in putting together the Secretary-General's first consolidated report as regards NEPAD. In general, Norway supports the conclusions and recommendations of the report. We also welcome the progress report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We generally support the approach of the report and its recommendations.

Norway shares the basic view that conflict prevention, including early warning and preventive action, need to be at the centre of any multilaterally-driven peace-building process. Too often the legacy of a conflict is yet another conflict. We have to find ways to stop this cycle. Conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building are very much two sides of the same coin. As the Secretary-General correctly points out in his recent report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, we have to have a strategy that embraces the entirety of peace and security, development, and human rights, democracy and good governance. We must also have multilateral institutions that are up to the job and capable of implementing such comprehensive strategies.

Fighting poverty and promoting development is the soundest investment we can make in Africa. NEPAD is a significant step towards economic and social development and political stability. Norway has joined the rest of the international community in a commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, a road map for halving poverty by the year 2015. We have pledged to reduce child mortality by two thirds. We have pledged to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

To reach the Millennium Development Goals, we need to focus on four points. First, the international community must improve the international framework conditions for trade, investment and debt. Secondly, national Governments in poor countries must focus on good governance and accountability. Thirdly, official development assistance must be increased and improved. Fourthly, the private sector and civil society must become active partners in poverty alleviation.

Violent conflicts have devastating consequences nationally, regionally and internationally. Conflicts cause displacement, high mortality rates, poverty and trauma, and divert resources away from development. Infrastructure is destroyed. Institutions are demolished. Investments are lost. Economies weaken. Institutions disintegrate, and, in some cases, States fail altogether.

Conflict has the potential to undo decades of human, economic and national development. In most cases, the United Nations only gets engaged in earnest after a conflict has broken out. The reasons are many,

but there is a high price to be paid in terms of loss of lives, human misery and setbacks in development.

There are many things we can do to prevent this from happening. We can do more to prevent economic factors such as diamonds and other natural resources from fuelling and prolonging conflicts. We can also take action to curb the illegal trade in small arms. Focusing on these two areas would enhance the effect of United Nations preventive action considerably.

Without peace and stability, our fight against poverty will fail. The Secretary-General has rightfully placed emphasis on the responsibility of African countries themselves for development in Africa. Regional and subregional organizations, and civil society, need to be involved in all stages of conflict resolution and in enhancing African capacity with regard to peacekeeping operations. In Maputo this year, we saw the formal launching of the African Union Peace and Security Council, and we have recently seen efforts made to settle disputes and conflicts on the subregional level that have led to positive results.

The role of the international community should primarily be to strengthen and support efforts and initiatives within the African countries themselves. We look forward to furthering our cooperation with the African community of States, together with the United Nations, regional and subregional structures and, not least, a vibrant civil society where gender and rights-based approaches are of key importance.

Norway, together with Italy, the United States and the United Kingdom, supports and participates in the Sudan peace talks. The talks are led by the regional organization the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and headed by Kenya. On 25 September this year, the parties signed an agreement on the principles for resolving the sensitive issues of security arrangements for a peace agreement. Hopefully, this will pave the way for the signing of a full peace agreement this autumn.

Peace in Sudan would end one of Africa's longest conflicts. Two million people have been killed and more than 4 million have become refugees or internally displaced over the last 20 years. A peace agreement would be a strong signal that parties of different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds can work and live together. It would hopefully have great impact on the stability of the region.

But Sudanese society will need to see the concrete results of a peace agreement. This will underline the fact that peace pays. Preparations for a broad-based and long-term assistance effort has been under way for some time. Norway, as co-chair of the IGAD Partners Forum, will host a donor conference as soon as there is a peace agreement.

The absence of war does not necessarily equal peace. Getting the parties to the negotiating table is only the first step. Then comes the harder part: the consolidation of peace in post-conflict situations. This involves promoting social and economic development, as well as addressing political and security issues.

Here, the international community can help build the necessary competence, capacity, institutions and processes for non-violent conflict resolution. And here, the United Nations has an indispensable role as partner in supporting NEPAD and thus, in promoting peace and development in Africa.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the last session of the General Assembly, we witnessed the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as an African initiative based on the realities, aspirations, needs and problems of Africa. The African countries asserted their ownership of the substance of this Partnership and committed themselves to bringing to bear all their social, political, economic and environmental strengths and to establishing the necessary institutions to that end.

At the last African Summit, held in Maputo, Mozambique — and here I wish to express my thanks to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mozambique for having introduced this item today — NEPAD was adopted as the principal programme of the African Union, marking a new development in terms of African ownership of that initiative. This is also reflected in the efforts of the executive committee of that Partnership throughout the last year in the various areas in which it is active.

I would like to place on record our appreciation for the growing worldwide interest in NEPAD. In this regard, however, we would say that that interest is still purely moral and political in nature.

We greatly rely on the efforts of Ambassador Ibrahima Gambari and the group that he heads in the United Nations in terms of mobilizing more interest and international commitment in support of NEPAD

from the technical and financial standpoint. We underscore the need to unify and coordinate the activities of the United Nations agencies and other international organizations to help to fully implement this initiative, particularly with respect to questions relating to economic and social development. The activities should reflect the commitment of the international community to work for full implementation and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in a manner consonant with current efforts to promote international peace and security.

For us, NEPAD is a framework for a necessary partnership embodying the principle of reciprocal responsibility and commitment between Africa and the rest of the world. We aspire to a serious partnership that will recognize the particular characteristics and capabilities of Africa, that stems from a joint resolve to eradicate the causes of conflict, violence and economic marginalization and that lays the foundation for respect for the decisions taken by the peoples of the continent in terms of their development priorities and programmes to improve life there.

The United Nations contributions to peacekeeping and peace-building in Africa are increasingly important, particularly as regards the provision and mobilization of technical and financial support required for African institution-building and strengthening in that regard. The efforts on the continent to establish machinery to prevent and manage conflict in the context of the African Union, in particular the idea of establishing a Peace and Security Council require joint study by the United Nations and the African Union of the needs and requirements involved in those endeavours, while identifying areas in which the United Nations can provide assistance and possible sources of finance for those mechanisms.

In this regard, we would highlight the continent's priorities, especially with respect to combating the proliferation and smuggling of small arms and light weapons and strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and Africa and subregional organizations in such vital areas as peacekeeping operations. Here, we stress disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants and their reintegration into civilian life, the protection of civilians and all matters relating to the present and future conditions of refugees and displaced persons from a regional perspective.

In that context, I wish once again to stress that our work to end conflicts in Africa should not be limited to achieving or monitoring a ceasefire. Nor will they end by returning combatants to their barracks, protecting facilities or facilitating meetings of provisional or transitional governments. The real challenge lies in managing post-conflict situations that require a set of intertwined programmes for reconciliation and political, economic, social and administrative development.

The Government of Egypt takes note of what is stated in the Secretary-General's report on progress in the implementation of his recommendations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report attests to the various initiatives and programmes that the United Nations system is carrying out in African countries in post-conflict situations. We note that the Secretary-General has referred in his report to the important element of comprehensive and permanent peace-building. However, in that regard, I wish to note that progress in comprehensive and permanent peace-building depends on the continuous commitment of the international community to African countries emerging from conflict, through the provision of the financial resources necessary to continue to build upon the progress already made in the political and security areas.

In that regard, we stress the need to develop coordination mechanisms among United Nations organs and programmes for resolving and managing conflicts and for the building and maintaining of peace in Africa, including the international financial institutions, so that we can define the role and the activities of each programme and organ at every stage of conflict management. We must also prepare consistent and coherent plans and programmes that reflect the true nature and special needs of societies concerned, while avoiding overlapping activities and setting aside the least effective ones.

That way it will be possible to maximize the use of available human and material resources. Accordingly, the Egyptian delegation takes the view that the organs and programmes of the United Nations system should develop channels for daily communication and interaction with governmental and non-governmental structures and with national institutions in the countries concerned, as well as with the African Union and with relevant subregional organizations, to ensure ongoing coordination and dovetailing of joint activities.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): There is no doubt that, without peace there can be no

development. In many African countries facing conflict, development efforts — even when still possible — have inevitably been eroded. Notwithstanding the important progress that has been made in peace-building and development in recent years, thanks to the efforts of the African countries themselves and to the support of the international community, conflicts persist and continue to affect many countries and regions beset also by disease and poverty.

The comprehensive reports of the Secretary-General eloquently highlight the scope of the difficulties and the problems that impede Africa's development. The clarity with which they describe efforts by African countries and the support of the international community and the United Nations system facilitates understanding of the gravity of the situation in Africa and the continent's main concerns.

Joint consideration of the items entitled "The New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support" and the sub-item entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", which in many cases are interdependent, seems appropriate because it makes it possible to deal with both of them in a coordinated and integrated manner. However, given the specific nature of each of those items, my delegation believes that separate reports on them should continue to be issued.

On the question of durable peace and sustainable development, my delegation welcomes the ongoing attention paid by the Secretary-General to the sensitive question of conflict resolution and the maintenance of peace in Africa, as well as his support for African initiatives in resolving conflicts.

The efforts made since June 2002 in the Central African Republic, in Angola and, recently, in Liberia, for which the Secretary-General has just appointed a Special Representative, are significant and should be intensified. The establishment by the Economic and Social Council of Ad Hoc Advisory Groups for Guinea-Bissau and Burundi is also commendable, as they are aimed at coordinating the support of the international community and of the United Nations system for the transition from the post-conflict phase to that of recovery and reconstruction in those countries, which are emerging from conflict.

It is clear that cooperation and coordination among the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict and the competent mechanisms of the African Union should be further strengthened so that initiatives for peace and development in Africa can become part of a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach. The political will and determination of African countries to achieve lasting settlements of the many conflicts that continue to ravage the continent depend, however, on the existence of adequate African capacities. We believe that these are two basic conditions for the creation of such capacities.

First, the resources needed for these capacities must not be diverted from the development effort. Secondly, large-scale support and encouragement for African peace and security initiatives should not ultimately lead to the international community's abandoning conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa, or particularly to the disengagement of the United Nations and its Security Council, which, under the Charter, bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

A year ago the Assembly adopted two important resolutions on Africa: resolution 57/2, entitled "United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development", which welcomed NEPAD and confirmed that international support for the New Partnership was essential; and resolution 57/7, which terminated the United Nations New Agenda for Africa in the 1990s and made NEPAD a reference framework for support for Africa by the United Nations system and the international community. Twelve months later, we now have our first opportunity together to assess the progress made in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the international community's support for NEPAD. It is extremely encouraging to observe that the African countries are resolutely committed to attaining the goals that have been set and have taken promising steps in that direction.

The report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/58/254) — and we welcome its comprehensive approach and simplicity of format, which were intended to make it easier to follow up support for NEPAD — sets out in a precise manner the obstacles encountered on the ground. It is clear that the lack of financial resources and the persistence of conflicts and endemic diseases that continue to decimate the human resources

of the continent are major obstacles that weaken the capacity and development efforts of the African countries. In shouldering their responsibility, first and foremost to provide for their own development, the African countries have made enormous national sacrifices at the political, economic and social levels to meet all of the conditions to make this new African partnership a success.

We welcome the progress made in priority areas such as governance, peace and security, national coordination, agriculture, health, education, environment, tourism, infrastructure and industrialization. Certainly, more efforts need to be made to strengthen the resolve of African countries to move ahead with their implementation of NEPAD.

The recent establishment of new African Union institutions adapted to current conditions stems naturally from the common will and commitment, now irreversible, to use all the machinery that can help attain the goals of NEPAD, with a view to lifting the continent out of underdevelopment and providing better conditions for its active integration into the world economy.

We welcome the partnership established between NEPAD and the Group of Eight (G-8), as well as the commitments of the G-8 to support Africa's efforts. We also welcome the many support initiatives of certain developed countries for Africa. Whether multilateral or bilateral, such initiatives should be encouraged.

In his report, the Secretary-General rightly stresses the particular importance of the contribution of the international community, while noting that efforts still need to be made in the areas of official development assistance, providing relief for the serious external debt burden, liberalization of international trade and encouraging private investment flows towards Africa.

In his report on implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323), the Secretary-General clearly notes that the success or failure of the Millennium Development Goals depends on whether the developed countries live up to their commitments in those areas. That shows how closely the fate of NEPAD remains tied to the establishment of an enabling international environment which will, to a large extent, determine the attainment of goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals, concerning the establishment of a global partnership for development and in particular, its benchmarks relating to debt, official development assistance and the establishment of an open multilateral financial and trading system. My delegation is convinced that an active, consistent response to these decisive questions of development financing requires a comprehensive and integrated approach.

The United Nations system must play a major role in helping to support Africa's efforts. Operational activities are of great importance here, but they must be carried out with strict universality, objectivity and neutrality and be free of any temptation to interfere in the internal affairs of recipient countries.

In conclusion, I wish to stress the importance of the creation of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa. The creation of that Office is an expression of the United Nations commitment to provide regular follow-up to international support for NEPAD. That Office is of crucial importance for Africa and for following up the implementation of the New Partnership, and it needs to be provided with sufficient human and financial resources to enable it to succeed.

Mr. Natama (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all, Mr. President, to pay tribute to you for the way in which you and the other members of the Bureau are directing the work of this session. My delegation assures you of its full cooperation as you carry out your tasks.

I wish also to thank the Secretariat for the relevance of the reports before us, their conciseness and exactitude makes them easy to use. My delegation fully endorses the statement made on behalf of the African Group. Nonetheless, we also wish to make a few general comments on the items before us today.

A few months ago, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) seemed to be at a crossroads, on the one hand because of the war in Iraq, and on the other hand because of the continuing doubts about the capacity of African leaders to apply the principles of good political and economic governance that they themselves espoused in the Durban Declaration of July 2001.

That apparent uncertainty was dispelled with the adoption of a more recent declaration on the implementation of NEPAD at the second ordinary session of the African Union Summit, held in Maputo from 10

to 12 July 2003. All of these initiatives taken by African heads of State are important milestones marking a genuine commitment to a new start for the continent, which is now being reflected in practical terms by the fact that some 15 countries have spontaneously and voluntarily joined the African Peer Review Mechanism.

I would like to stress here that for my country — whose Government on 20 March 2003 took the decisive step of joining the Mechanism — peer review is a vital development tool in view of its significant impact on the building of the institutional, political and economic capacities of our countries. Without doubt, the fact that the first reviews will very soon be carried out is incontestable proof of the resolve of African States to establish a sound environment which will promote transparent management.

Concerning ongoing progress, we should also mention the process of creating an African Peace and Security Council. The African continent, without doubt, needs to end the wars that continue to ravage it, in order to seriously plan for its development. The Council is therefore vital, and rapid ratification of the Protocol relating to its establishment will make it possible for leaders to prevent, control and resolve conflicts.

Moreover, I take this opportunity here to pay tribute to the remarkable work done by the Economic and Social Council concerning African countries emerging from conflict. As members know, at its most recent substantive session the Economic and Social Council extended the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and established an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi.

These new elements on the agenda of the Economic and Social Council have served to support the concept that there can be no development without peace. With this fresh impetus, the secretariat of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Commission of the African Union, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council should further strengthen their cooperation on issues of peace, security and development. At this stage, tangible progress has been made in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, with further progress expected in Liberia and the Côte d'Ivoire.

My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General's report concerning the difficulties and constraints in implementing NEPAD, particularly the issue of weak institutional capacity for planning and executing development programmes at the regional and national levels, as well as the problem of inadequate resources. However, in the spirit of the New Partnership, the principle of collective responsibility of all countries of the continent should prevail in seeking resolutions to problems. The suggestion that African countries themselves might devote their own resources to funding NEPAD would be welcome and could more readily attract the support of development partners. As for mobilizing the international community, which has thus far been regarded as modest, it should be encouraged to keep pace with the efforts and determination of African leaders. Africa, moreover, is hoping for the support of the international community in the crucial area of access to markets of the North. In that spirit, it would be desirable for initiatives such as African Growth and Opportunity Act to be extended to all African countries, without ideological considerations, and for agricultural subsidies by Europe and North America to be granted in accordance with World Trade Organization rules.

The success of NEPAD requires a participatory approach to its implementation. Burkina Faso believes that every African State must initiate broad debate to make their population at all levels of society aware of this new initiative so that the people may take ownership of it. The political will that has been forcefully expressed by heads of State will remain wishful thinking if grass-roots communities are not deeply involved in the implementation of this programme, especially since the social environment is just as important as good governance, stability and many other factors affecting the decisions of various public and private international investors. That is why Burkina Faso has launched a broad public awareness campaign on NEPAD, through, among other things, the holding of public debates with civil society, universities and national and local decision makers.

Moreover, a subregional approach, as a strategic framework for the implementation of NEPAD mechanisms, has prompted my country to initiate and host over the past months subregional meetings on sectoral issues, such as on agriculture and livestock raising, in conjunction with the Food and Agricultural Organization, as well as on education, science and culture with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. In the same vein, Burkina Faso will be hosting a summit of African Union heads of State on employment and the fight against poverty in 2004.

As it enters its operational phase, NEPAD will need strengthened human capacities. Burkina Faso is preparing for this by establishing an instrument that is able to meet the new requirements, namely a political, economic and social policy analysis centre. Furthermore, Burkina Faso is now adopting its second national plan for good governance, which will incorporate the targets, standards and criteria of the African Peer Review Mechanism for the forthcoming review in the framework of that Mechanism, in September 2004. My country intends to continue to pursue its advocacy activities while stressing the implementation of development projects in accordance with the guidelines agreed in NEPAD, according to which we have adapted our national campaign against poverty.

I would like to conclude by commending the United Nations system for its invaluable contributions over the past decades to extricate Africa from underdevelopment. The follow-up to the implementation General Assembly resolution 57/7 once again grants the United Nations a leadership role in coordinating and harmonizing international activities for Africa.

Mr. Isakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The progressive development of Africa is being stalled by several factors. The destructive impact of illegal armed groups are eroding the very basis of the existence of sovereign States. They continually fuel the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, mercenary activities, the use of child soldiers, gross violations of human rights and the norms of humanitarian law, the illegal export of natural resources and transborder crime. Consequently, conflict that spills across borders takes on a subregional nature, destroys State structures and law and order and causes refugee flows. They also threaten the peace and stability of the entire continent. We can counter this only by acting together.

Russia supports the efforts undertaken by the United Nations to strengthen the peacekeeping capacities of Africa and establish effective cooperation in the field of peacekeeping. We note with satisfaction that the progress that has been achieved during the past year in the settlement of armed conflict in Africa. The successful United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia and other crisis zones show the intrinsic link between peace and stability and fully-fledged socio-economic recovery in conflict-torn countries.

The new kinds of partnership being forged between the United Nations and regional organizations is of particular significance in this context. Among the positive examples of such partnership are the Security Council-mandated European Union mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the deployment of the forces of the Economic Community of West African States in Liberia. The events over the past months in the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau attest to the seriousness of the problems that African countries are facing in the post-conflict period.

The entire experience of Africa's development shows that what will prevent destabilization is the strengthening of State institutions, the development of democracy, tackling ongoing economic problems, combating corruption, providing secure borders, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and mutually beneficial relations with neighbours.

Moreover, it is quite clear that the main responsibility for Africa's future falls to the Africans themselves. One important step forward was the recent adoption of the principle of good-neighbourly relations by southern African countries under the Secretary-General's auspices. We are convinced that such exemplary multilateral cooperation with the participation of the United Nations can be used in other parts of Africa. Russia will continue to do its part with the resources available to it to strengthen peacekeeping capacity of Africa.

The social and economic aspects of the New Partnership for Africa's Development are crucial for guiding Africa towards sustainable development. In that respect, Russia will focus its efforts on debt alleviation of African countries in the framework of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. Between 1998 and 2002, Russia wrote off $11.2 billion of the debt of African countries, including $3.4 billion in 2002. A decision was made that Russia would contribute an additional $10 million to the Initiative Trust Fund between 2003 and 2004. The States of the continent are being given wide trade preference. Current Russian legislation stipulates that traditional exports from the least developed countries, most of which are African, are exempt from customs import duties. These goods are not subject to quantitative import restrictions or to anti-dumping, countervailing or special protection measures. More than 80 per cent of Russia's imports from Africa receive preferential treatment.

With the assistance of Russian companies, several major investment projects are being carried out in Africa, including projects to develop mineral resources, energy and metallurgy. Russia provides tangible assistance to African countries in areas such as training and public health. Each year they are granted approximately 800 Russian State scholarships. Russian teachers and doctors are working in the continent. In the context of the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Russia is assisting African countries to help fight diverse infectious diseases.

Russia provides the African countries humanitarian assistance to deal with the effects of natural disasters. During 2002 and 2003, assistance was provided to Algeria, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and through the World Food Programme Russia has given emergency food aid to Angola. In 2003, Russia made a voluntary contribution to the budget of the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the direct funding of humanitarian operations in Africa. We intend to continue to participate actively in international efforts in support of the country's social economic development.

Mr. De La Sabliere (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the high level of attention being given to Africa by the Assembly. Our debate today, like the resolution we adopted last year, attests to the importance assumed by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) — an initiative of African countries — and the need to continue and to strengthen our partnership with Africa.

The Secretary-General's report describes clearly and fully the progress made and the steps still to be taken. We agree with his conclusions and recommendations. Their implementation must be a priority, and France will make its full contribution.

The Italian presidency of the European Union described earlier the actions of the Europeans in this regard. Our own commitment falls within that framework. We aim to work together with African countries, according to their defined principles, which are also ours, and in keeping with their priorities — peace and security, fighting poverty, hunger and disease, access to water and education and protection of natural resources. Those concur with the goals that the United Nations and the international community established at the Millennium Summit, the Monterrey Conference and the Johannesburg Summit. Indeed, we all know that the Millennium Development Goals apply particularly to Africa.

Attaining those Goals is still possible. To that end, we must apply all instruments available to us to support the efforts of African countries themselves — investment, trade, official development assistance, debt relief, innovative sources of financing, technology transfer and expertise. Each must be used to a greater extent and more effectively than we do now.

I will not review most of those points. Our Italian colleague has demonstrated the resolve of Europeans to make progress in that direction for the purpose of securing sustainable development for Africa. I will make a few additional remarks on some points to which France attaches special importance.

First, the work done since last year within NEPAD and by the African Union has been remarkable, as was demonstrated by the outcome of the Maputo Summit in July. I am thinking particularly of the Peer Review Mechanism, with 16 countries having already signed the memorandum. We welcome the establishment of the group of eminent persons and the commitment of the countries that have volunteered to serve on it. I am also thinking of the policies designed by NEPAD in important areas such as agriculture, health and the environment.

We are all aware that much remains to be done, but action has begun. Now we need to move to implementation. The subregional organizations can play a very valuable role in that regard.

My second point, the partnership between NEPAD and the Group of 8 (G-8), was further built upon in Evian, along the lines set by the Genoa and Kananaskis summits. The report adopted by the heads of State and Government spells out how the G-8 members will strive to respond to the ambitions of the African countries. I would also like to draw attention to G-8 support for establishing an early warning mechanism and for the creation of a pre-positioned African force, in keeping with the so-called Berlin Process adopted at Evian and Maputo. This is one of the most important achievements of the Partnership, as peace and security are essential to development and prosperity.

Ratification of the protocol establishing the African Union Peace and Security Council will mark a another positive step forward. The European Union, for its part, is ready to support African peacekeeping operations under United Nations auspices.

Thirdly, I wish to mention some of the priorities set by NEPAD that we strongly support, together with the European Union and the G-8. These priorities are both interdependent and critical to the success of the whole programme.

The first priority is to combat AIDS. That pandemic affects certain African countries to a tragic extent. The meetings on 22 September in New York demonstrated the strength of political mobilization within the international community. It is essential that that be translated into practical terms through greater effort. Following the Secretary-General, the President of the French Republic has appealed to all donors to increase their support to the Global Fund in order to raise $3 billion needed by the Fund as early as next year. Europe, for its part, has already committed itself to the Fund. At the same time, the agreement achieved concerning access to medicine is important. It is vital that the countries that need it take full advantage of it.

The second priority is access to water and sanitation. The goals set at the Millennium Summit and the Johannesburg Summit are crucial. Following the Kyoto Forum, the G-8 adopted a plan of action that aims particularly at supporting NEPAD efforts in that area. All possible sources of financing should now be mobilized. The World Bank is a part of that work. The European Union envisages the creation of a European water fund, whose arrangements are still under review. We hope that the United Nations will also play a full role in this area.

The third priority is to combat hunger. As President Lula noted, food security is a matter of global concern. More than 40 million people are likely to die of hunger in Africa. While we need to take immediate measures to cope with threats of humanitarian crises, long-term solutions are also necessary. NEPAD has logically made agricultural development one of its priorities. For its part, the G-8 has committed itself to working to reverse the decline in official development assistance to agriculture and to enhance the trading potential of the countries concerned. The Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council in July expresses the same ideas. In that respect, too, implementation will be crucial.

The importance of infrastructure should not be underestimated. NEPAD and the subregional organizations represent a natural framework for discussing infrastructure. We are committed to encouraging investment in this area, including in the private sector.

My fourth and final point relates to trade. We deeply regret the failure of the Cancún meeting. Everybody loses in such circumstances. We are aware, however, that the primary victims are the most vulnerable countries. When all those involved are ready, and negotiations resume, heightened attention must be paid to the specific needs of African countries. France and the European Union, as the Italian presidency of the Union has noted, have made proposals in this regard relating to market access, export subsidies for agricultural products and the problem of commodity prices — an issue that you, Mr. President, have made one of your priorities. We hope that those ideas will be taken into account.

Support for NEPAD should involve the pooling of all of our efforts, and should be regarded as a long-term undertaking. That is why France has proposed extending and expanding the partnership with the Group of Eight to other partners and international organizations that are involved. In this regard, we will be hosting, in Paris, the first meeting of a new forum for partnership with Africa, whose mission will be to monitor and support the progress made by Africans on all issues. The Secretary-General will, of course, be represented in that forum.

The United Nations plays a key role in support of NEPAD through its various agencies, which should lend greater support to existing policies, with a view to mobilizing the international community and ensuring that its activities are coherent and properly organized in terms of monitoring and evaluation of results. In this regard, we welcome the action taken by the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser.

Africa and NEPAD must remain at the heart of the General Assembly's agenda as an issue of primary importance. France, working within the European Union, will lend its full support to a resolution that reflects the ambition that inspired us last year, taking note of the changes that have taken place and charting the course to follow next year.

As the President of the Republic has noted, confidence in Africa has brought us together. We are committed to breaking the vicious circle of powerlessness and lack of mobilization. Our duty here in the General Assembly is to ensure that that commitment is fulfilled.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): I am pleased to speak today in affirmation of what President Bush has called the growing strategic relationship between the United States and the African continent. Africa matters to the United States Government because it matters to the American people. Our ties have taught us unforgettable lessons of human suffering and human potential, and they have given us unshakeable confidence in the human spirit and in our common future.

As President Bush said in Abuja, Nigeria, last July, working together, we can help make this a decade of rising prosperity and expanding peace across Africa. That goal is ambitious, but the way forward is clear and well marked on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

The United States has strongly supported the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) since its inception. NEPAD is a dramatic commitment by African leaders to end conflict and hasten progress by taking concrete action to promote peace and stability, to consolidate democracy and to provide sound economic management and people-centred development. That is as it should be: Africa's future mapped out by Africans on behalf of Africans.

We commend African leaders for their vision in launching NEPAD. In particular, we wish to recognize President Mbeki, President Wade and President Obasanjo for their pivotal role in developing and guiding the implementation of NEPAD. We are encouraged by recent progress in the implementation of what we hope will be a rigorous and transparent African Peer Review Mechanism, overseen by the Panel of Eminent Persons.

These endeavours have been reinforced by the role African leaders and regional organizations, such as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the African Union peacekeeping mission in Burundi, are playing in preventing and resolving conflict in Africa.

Africa's leadership reversed a coup d'état in Sao Tome and Principe in July; played a pivotal role in defusing the conflict in Liberia; and provided critical peacekeeping functions in Côte d'Ivoire. It is making progress in containing tensions in Burundi and helping to address the complex, troubling situation in Zimbabwe. It has played a key role in peace negotiations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and it is guiding African-led mediation efforts in Sudan that are bearing fruit.

The United States has a deep and continuing commitment to these initiatives in pursuit of peace and security, which are so essential to the continent's hopes for strong and sustainable economic growth and development. Thus we are training peacekeepers, holding military education seminars at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies and working with African mediators and subregional organizations to enhance their conflict-resolution capabilities.

At the same time, we are supporting the efforts of Africa's leaders to stop war and terror on the continent and working with those same leaders to expand trade, opportunity and enterprise for the African people.

America is already the world's largest investor in Africa's economies, but enormous opportunities remain open to us both. Under the historic African Growth and Opportunity Act, the United states is opening its dynamic markets to thousands of products from Africa. This reflects a shared United States-NEPAD emphasis on the vital role of trade in economic growth and development, bringing millions of dollars in new investments to Africa's shores, along with thousands of new jobs for African workers.

These new trade and investment linkages benefit not only Africa's trade with the United States but also economic ties within Africa itself and between Africa and the rest of the world. The fact is that African countries have suffered too long from their relative isolation from the global economy.

We must therefore find ways to overcome the failure of the Cancún Ministerial Meeting to forge a consensus on how to further open the world's markets and take advantage of the promise of market-led, poverty-reducing growth. Hundreds of billions of dollars per year in increased income — and the lives that would be improved by that income — are at stake. Ambitious global trade liberalization offers as much promise to Africa as to any other region in the world, perhaps more.

Complementing United States trade policies, the President's Millennium Challenge Account, which is now before the Congress, will make substantially increased resources available to help developing countries that demonstrate, not promise, a strong commitment to liberty and prosperity for all their people.

The Millennium Challenge Account draws on one of the essential lessons of development: countries prosper when their Governments function justly, effectively and transparently. This requires the rule of law, independent judiciaries and respect for the rights of citizens, including the right to choose their own representatives.

Of course, these elements are integral to Africa's ability to achieve the vision of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). As President Bush stated earlier this year in South Africa, "NEPAD ... can help extend democracy and free markets and transparency across the continent ...".

Indeed, to the extent NEPAD achieves the goals of good governance, our own commitments to African peace, security, trade and economic development will have greater impact. The task now is for African Governments to translate NEPAD's aspirations into specific actions at the national level by investing in their people, implementing responsible economic policies that foster trade and investment and by being open and accountable in their budget, procurement and tax systems.

Needless to say, we do recognize that even as many African nations accept the responsibility of good government, they also confront extreme challenges in the areas of health, education, and humanitarian relief.

The challenge of implementing ambitious reforms while human survival is in doubt can be overwhelming. As Africa's true partner and friend, our commitment to Africa therefore includes the $15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and continued United States leadership in the global effort to fight HIV/AIDS; the African Education Initiative, contributing over $200 million in new money, combined with existing programmes, to total $600 million over the next five years for basic education in Africa; and $850 million in emergency assistance to help Africa address its food crises.

Taken all together, we believe that the elements of the United States Government's policy towards Africa reinforces NEPAD's affirmation of an African destiny shaped by the wise stewardship of democratically elected African Governments. Our overarching goal, then, is to fulfil the President's vision of a growing strategic relationship between the continent of Africa and the United States of America. The shared history, friendship and common values that bind us together demand nothing less.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the two comprehensive reports that are under consideration today — one on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/58/254) and another on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/58/352). We believe that both these reports are extremely important and while they might address similar challenges, they are nevertheless distinct. NEPAD is a programme of the African Union, an African-grown and owned socio-economic plan for the continent, with a number of very distinct priorities and programmes.

The report concerning the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa addresses among other things, peacekeeping, peacemaking, refugees and the proliferation of small arms, issues that are dealt with by other institutions of the African Union.

Over a year ago, during a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on NEPAD, our discussions focused mostly on what NEPAD hopes to achieve and how we expected it to work. Today, we are glad to report that significant progress has been made in the implementation of NEPAD.

NEPAD has completed many continent-wide programmes and strategies. These include comprehensive plans for African agricultural development, health programmes and a multi-sectoral AIDS strategy, a NEPAD education programme, a tourism strategy, and programmes for industrialization and infrastructure development. The Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee has proven to be a useful mechanism for the overall, hands-on overseeing of the implementation of NEPAD.

More important, Africa has moved beyond the completion of strategies and programmes to implementation. At the subregional level, there have been a number of projects started, including the electricity link between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia, the oil pipeline that runs through a number of West African Countries, the New Rice for Africa initiative, the printing of school textbooks, school feeding programmes and many more.

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) which is supposed to help promote good governance on the African continent, has now been established. While this is quite a novel and courageous process to be

undertaken by any group of countries, Africa is convinced of the contribution that the APRM could make to promote good governance on our continent. It is therefore very encouraging that more than 16 countries have so far acceded to the Peer Review Mechanism and many more are considering becoming part of the Mechanism.

South Africa appreciates the focus placed on the APRM in the Secretary-General's report and the effort made to describe the structures and procedures involved in it. The APRM is rightly described as a means of monitoring progress towards good economic and political governance through peer learning and peer-sharing.

But contrary to the report of the Secretary-General, the APRM was not meant to be a "means of attracting support from development partners". (*A/58/254, para. 8*) Rather, the APRM was Africa's own effort for seeking good governance for Africa itself and not as a means to appeal to the international community.

We have also seen progress in the United Nations with the establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. That Office is already making quite a difference and has had numerous outputs, such as contributing to the reports before us today. We hope it will be provided with the necessary resources to enable it to fulfil its important mandate within the United Nations. In this regard, we look forward to the unveiling and implementation of the advocacy strategy of the Office of the Special Adviser.

We are further encouraged by the growing efforts of the United Nations system to mainstream NEPAD into its priorities and programmes. The close cooperation between the NEPAD secretariat and African regional and subregional organizations, as well as individual Governments within the United Nations system, is, indeed, very heartening. We hope to see this trend expand even further in future.

I am pleased that the report does not neglect to highlight the challenges and constraints still faced by many African countries. In a true spirit of partnership, these cannot be addressed through the efforts of the African countries alone. They need the support of the international community. Such challenges and constraints are particularly clear in the areas of resource mobilization.

Regarding external debt, South Africa appreciates the debt relief provided by a number of both developed and developing country bilateral creditors. The efforts to fully finance the Trust Fund financing the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative are also valuable. The increase in the number of African countries reaching their decision and completion points is also appreciated. In its current form, however, the HIPC Initiative seems not to be able to deliver the relief that everyone expected of it when it was enhanced some four years ago. One of the results is that some heavily indebted poor countries still spend more on servicing their debt than on health and education.

We are looking forward to the international conference planned for 2004, at which we must look beyond HIPC and come up with new proposals for finding a solution to Africa's untenable debt burden. Consideration will have to be given to the proposals contained in the Monterrey Consensus and most recent General Assembly resolution on external debt with regard to the link between debt relief and a country's ability to generate the necessary resources to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

South Africa appreciates the increase in recent years in the flow of official development assistance to Africa, although it has not yet reached the 1990 level. In view of the limited supply of official development assistance, my delegation fully supports the efforts to increase aid effectiveness. Donor countries also place particular emphasis on the need to improve the effectiveness of official development assistance. That stance, however, contrasts sharply with the reluctance by some donor countries to untie certain types of aid to certain countries. The main consideration should be to ensure the maximum impact and benefit to be derived by the recipient country from the aid, not the benefits it could provide to other constituencies and interests. Otherwise the concept of aid efficiency would become a mere slogan which is applied selectively.

A very tragic picture was painted by the failure of Cancún to deliver a result that would have favoured the African and other developing countries. It almost made a mockery of the vows by all and sundry to make the Doha Round a development round, as well as earlier undertakings to provide increased market access to products from Africa. It was almost absurd — if not tragic — to see the four African least developed cotton-producing countries pitted against the giants of world trade, given that the cotton subsidies alone surpass the gross domestic product of those four African countries combined. Despite the most persuasive arguments of

the African least developed countries that they be given an equal chance to compete fairly, those poor countries were asked to find alternative livelihoods. If that is not an indictment of the current state of world trade, it is difficult to imagine what could be.

It is sad to see how the potential of the Cancún meeting to provide African and other developing countries with an opportunity to work their way out of abject poverty was squandered. It almost suggests that some want developing countries to remain forever dependent on the goodwill of donor Governments.

In the area of South-South cooperation, there has been a growing trend towards economic and technical cooperation between Africa and the other developing regions of Asia and Latin America. This has been given added impetus by the Asian-African Subregional Organizations Conference, which was co-hosted by South Africa and Indonesia in Bandung earlier this year. The second Africa-China Forum will take place in December this year, as will the Ministerial Conference on South-South Cooperation, in Marrakech, Morocco. Even more promising was the announcement during the general debate by India, Brazil and South Africa of an initiative to address issues of hunger and poverty. This marks the beginning of an initiative by developing countries to address issues that are urgent for the survival and prosperity of developing countries themselves.

South Africa believes that certain actions could be taken to make NEPAD more effective. These include the need to expand national focal points in order to ensure a coordinated and integrated implementation of NEPAD priorities at the national level. It will also be important to further popularize NEPAD at the national and continental levels so as to ensure buy-in by the general public. A clear and comprehensive communication strategy will be needed. The non-governmental and community-based organizations can play an important role in this regard. We welcomed the meeting organized by the African Union to discuss NEPAD with stakeholders in civil society in Africa. As of today, there is complete support for NEPAD in civil society and the private sector, and this is resulting in an added advantage on the part of many countries, which are deepening their commitment to NEPAD values and practices.

I would like to make some comments on issues specifically raised in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. In the field of peace and security, Africans are taking the initiative to address African problems. South Africa welcomes the extensive involvement of the United Nations in assisting African countries to resolve and manage conflicts. As the report points out, coordination between the United Nations and the African Union is particularly pertinent to post-conflict peace-building. Policies must be complementary and aim at achieving durable peace. In this regard, we were particularly pleased to hear that the Secretary-General consults regularly with the Bretton Woods institutions with a view to ensuring peace-friendly structural adjustment policies in Africa and elsewhere.

South Africa's own commitment to the promotion of an integrated and coordinated approach to post-conflict reconstruction is best demonstrated by our strong support for the creation and work of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and on Burundi. The work of those two Groups has already made quite a contribution to closer cooperation between different organs and structures within the United Nations system, particularly the closer cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The report itself refers to the creation of the United Nations Development Programme Emergency Economic Management Fund for Guinea-Bissau, as proposed by the Ad Hoc Group on Guinea-Bissau.

On the peacekeeping front, a number of efforts have been made over the past few years aimed at building Africa's capacity to resolve and manage conflict. The contributions of the European Union, as well as of the Group of Eight industrialized countries, deserve special mention. The complexity of conflict management also highlights the importance of close coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations. Assistance by the United Nations in drafting a ceasefire agreement for Burundi serves as a good example of constructive cooperation. The lessons learned and best practices emanating from the long and wide experience of the United Nations in areas such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and ceasefire implementation should certainly be shared with regional groups involved in peacemaking efforts.

We welcome further the emphasis placed on social development in the report. There can be no doubt about the important link between the promotion of peace and the promotion of social development. The

importance of an integrated approach to development was also highlighted during the recent World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, which also underscored the importance of coordination within the United Nations system in its interaction with Africa.

In this regard, South Africa welcomes the recent adoption by the Commission for Social Development of a resolution on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The resolution highlights the need to strengthen, in a spirit of partnership, international, regional and subregional cooperation for social development and implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.

The Commission for Social Development is also called upon to give prominence to the social dimensions of NEPAD in its future priority themes. South Africa is looking forward to the adoption by the General Assembly during its current session of the report of the forty-first session of the Commission for Social Development.

As far as the future of the report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa is concerned, South Africa will wish to see the continuation of the report. While it may be true that many of the issues dealt with in that report can be found elsewhere, it is of great importance to have the information collected in one report that focuses on all the issues as they particularly relate to Africa.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I associate the United Kingdom fully with the statement made by the presidency of the European Union. I also join others in thanking you, Sir, for this debate. The issues are central to the work of the United Nations and our common agenda of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Africa's current position is dramatic. If its situation does not improve, 23 countries will fail to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Democracy is gradually taking hold in the continent, but the number of poor people in the region continues to increase. Maternal and child mortality is increasing: a woman has a 1 in 13 chance of dying in pregnancy or childbirth and 75 per cent of the world's HIV/AIDS sufferers are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa's problems are complex and interconnected. Let me highlight four: first, conflict in key countries and regions. In January 2000 more than half of all African countries were affected by conflict, although I'm glad to say there are now promising signs of improvement. Secondly, governance — in some African countries the State has effectively failed. Thirdly, terms of trade have deteriorated and commodity prices have fallen. The result has been low investment and economic growth, insufficient jobs created for the poor and too few resources for health and education. Fourthly, HIV/AIDS has caused huge damage right across the continent.

But the news is not all bad. NEPAD is the most promising African-led development initiative in a generation. It aims to tackle HIV/AIDS, reduce poverty and sustain long-term economic growth. It is backed by a commitment to improve governance, build peacekeeping capacity and create the right environment for investment. The African Peer Review Mechanism, to begin in Ghana this year, is an important tool that we strongly support.

African countries know and have recognized that the primary responsibility rests with them. The international response to Africa's challenges must be implemented in partnership with those African Governments, working within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The G-8 responded two years ago by agreeing to a series of commitments under the G-8 Africa Action Plan. In June this year, G-8 countries reported the progress. We now look forward to the Africa partners forum meeting next month, under French chairmanship, to consider how further progress can be made.

Let me set out five areas which the United Kingdom considers require urgent further international effort. First, more and better development assistance. That is why the United Kingdom development assistance to Africa will rise to over £1 billion by 2006. But we must all increase the financing available for development. The United Kingdom is exploring with partners the best means of achieving this, for example, Gordon Brown's proposal for a new international finance facility. This aims to double resources for official development assistance up to 2015 by tapping into new private sources. We welcome the interest in this from the Secretary-General, other Member States, and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Secondly, we need to tackle trade. The current system does not work for the least developed countries. Africa's share of world trade is now less than 1 per cent. Trade rules must be improved to benefit the world's poor. The failure of the World Trade Organization (WTO) talks in Cancún is most damaging to the world's poorest countries. Africa stands to get a better deal through multilateral negotiations in the WTO than through a multitude of regional and bilateral agreements. That is why the United Kingdom is determined to do all it can to get the Doha Development Agenda round back on track. We are absolutely committed to progress in the negotiations and progress multilaterally on those areas most critical to African countries — agricultural market access, special and differential treatment provisions for poorer countries, and reductions in trade-distorting subsidies.

Thirdly, we must support African efforts to resolve armed conflicts. We should pay tribute to what is being achieved, for example, the substantial efforts by the Economic Community of West African States in West Africa.

African countries and regional and subregional organizations deserve international support so that they can engage more effectively to prevent and resolve violent conflicts and undertake peace support operations. A plan for training and operational support has been agreed between the G-8 and the African countries. The United Nations will be closely involved in its implementation and we must support African efforts to eliminate the flow of illicit weapons on the continent. The United Kingdom has pledged over £20 million to combat the proliferation of small arms, including regional programmes in East Africa, the Great Lakes region and Southern Africa. It remains the case that small arms kill more people in Africa as a whole, than anything other than disease.

Fourthly, we must do more to fight one of Africa's biggest challenges, HIV/AIDS. Twenty-nine million people across Africa are living with that scourge. The World Bank has warned that several African economies are facing collapse and family incomes are being decimated because of HIV/AIDS. The United Kingdom is proud to be the second largest donor of HIV/AIDS assistance and in 2002-2003 we invested over £270 million worldwide, the dollar equivalent being in excess of $420 million. This will enable all Africans who need it to have access to effective HIV/AIDS treatment. That goal is an international priority.

Fifthly, we must work to help strengthen governance in African States. Effective institutions, representative democracy and accountable government are essential conditions for private sector investment, growth and poverty reduction. The United Kingdom supports stronger capacity-building programmes for this.

Furthering the rule of law should be a common goal for all Members of the United Nations. The rule of law makes democracy more likely and that, in turn, makes conflict less probable.

Let me conclude by saying that the Secretary-General has rightly signalled the importance of a high-level review in this Assembly in 2005 of the progress being made on the Millennium Declaration. I hope that the United Kingdom will be able then, as President of the G-8 and of the European Union, which falls to us in 2005, to report substantial progress on the commitments we have all made. But specifically, it is vital that all of us do more to support NEPAD and to support Africans in their effort to lift Africa out of poverty. That is a vital task for the United Nations system and for all its Member States. This, Sir, must be our shared endeavour.

Mr. Mizukami (Japan): The Government of Japan has been promoting the principles of Africa's ownership and international partnership for African development through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process since 1993. Therefore Japan has been sincerely respecting and supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the clear and concrete demonstration of Africa's ownership, from the time of its launching. Two weeks ago, Japan renewed its commitment to supporting NEPAD by hosting the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III), together with 89 countries and 47 organizations that participated in the Conference.

Japan welcomes the progress made in the implementation of NEPAD. We are pleased that the African Peer Review Mechanism has been established and that so far 16 countries have acceded to it. Sharing good practices and development experiences through peer reviews is instrumental in strengthening Africa's ownership and contributing to Africa's development through NEPAD. These factors are indispensable for African development. We hope that the Peer Review

Mechanism will be promoted further and will be successful.

We are also pleased to note the progress made in areas such as agriculture, health, infrastructure and investment within the framework of NEPAD. However, we are concerned that capacity-building in Africa continues to be a serious challenge, coupled with the brain drain. We believe that education is the bedrock for development and human resources are the key to nation-building. We strongly hope that both African countries and international donors will invest more in the development of the skills and abilities of people in Africa. Japan believes that Asia-Africa cooperation, a principal feature of the TICAD process, can contribute a lot to capacity-building in Africa.

Prime Minister Koizumi announced at TICAD III the three pillars that comprise Japan's initiative for assistance to the implementation of NEPAD.

With regard to the first pillar, "human-centred development", human resource development is always Japan's top priority in development assistance. In addition, on the occasion of TICAD III, the Prime Minister announced that over the next five years Japan aims to extend grant-in-aid assistance to Africa totalling $1 billion in areas such as health and medical care, including measures against HIV/AIDS, as well as education, water and food.

The second pillar is "poverty reduction through economic growth". Without economic growth, poverty cannot be reduced sustainably. In particular, Japan has been placing strong emphasis on cooperation to improve agricultural productivity because agriculture is the backbone of African economies. The establishment of the New Rice for Africa initiative is among the successful examples of Japan's efforts.

Infrastructure is also essential for economic development. Japan places emphasis on such areas as transportation, communication, energy, and water. In the area of trade and investment, Japan will promote investment in Africa by Japanese companies through measures such as overseas investment loans, with a target of approximately $300 million in loans over five years.

The third pillar is "consolidation of peace". While the progress that has been made in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, for example, is encouraging, the prevalence of unresolved conflicts and residual causes of conflict in Africa is of grave concern to all of us. We welcome in this connection the initiative taken by regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, to address the conflicts in these countries. Africa's own will and determination, which were crystallized by NEPAD, are indeed the key to tackling conflicts in Africa in the future.

My Government believes at the same time that emergency measures alone taken vis-à-vis these conflicts will not make for lasting peace in Africa but must be accompanied by the post-conflict peace process, domestic security, and humanitarian and reconstruction assistance — three elements which are indispensable to the consolidation of peace. We in the international community must therefore encourage and support the efforts of African countries in these areas. The Government of Japan, for its part, has contributed to such efforts in various fields, and we will continue to actively support the activities of African regional and subregional organizations in the areas of conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Ambassador Haraguchi became one of the members of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi, at the request of Ambassador Nteturuye of Burundi. We are pleased to be able to participate in the Advisory Group and would like to work with other members of the Group in order to prepare recommendations for a long-term programme of support for Burundi. It also gives my Government a good opportunity to accumulate knowledge of and experience in the post-conflict development of African countries.

Japan wishes to engage in further dialogue with its African partners in order to address the question of how the people of Africa can free themselves from threats against their lives and human dignity, such as those posed by poverty, conflict and infectious disease. Japan, in other words, would like to contribute to Africa's quest for human security and its desire to realize a society in which people can live with hope in their hearts instead of despair.

Mr. Kazemi Kamyab (Islamic Republic of Iran): It is indeed very opportune for the General Assembly to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The reality of the situation faced by many millions of people in Africa only calls for a real, serious and comprehensive

approach, as well as a policy and action on a scale, with, and of a magnitude, commensurate with the situation itself. Let me seize this opportunity to reiterate my country's full solidarity with African countries, all of which without fail belong to the developing family. My country currently has an active diplomatic presence in most African countries, and they, in turn, have strengthened their diplomatic presence in Tehran.

With determination and cooperation, we have been able to contribute to a large number of projects and reconstruction plans in many African countries. The cordial and close cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the countries of the continent is on the rise, both in the bilateral field and on the international scene. Nonetheless, and perhaps because of often time-consuming bottlenecks and the lack of necessary infrastructure, economic ties have not been progressing on an equal footing with political relations. Of course, with determination and mutual cooperation, we have been able to contribute to many projects and reconstruction plans in many African countries.

Building infrastructure, constructing hospitals and health clinics and cooperation in the academic and scientific fields are but some of very general topics under which we have contributed to the development of the poorer areas of the continent. Given the vulnerability of the continent to many natural disasters, my country has provided financial and humanitarian assistance that almost always includes grants. Furthermore, in order to promote and facilitate economic and commercial relations, my Government has allocated a line of credit of $200 million for Africa. The credit ceiling shall be decided on the basis of mutual banking agreements.

The African renaissance, the rebirth we have all been talking about in recent years, can only be initiated and undertaken in all earnestness by Africans themselves and by African countries individually and collectively. NEPAD has embodied all of those elements. There is, of course, a role for others in the international community, including the United Nations. As far as the United Nations system is concerned, it should undertake to integrate all its various plans, programmes and initiatives into a comprehensive policy framework, comprising all political, economic and social components and having clear and well-defined roles and mandates for the relevant executing agencies and departments. Yes, there is a way forward for Africa. Let us all start moving down that road.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): As we have done on many occasions in times past, Guyana is pleased once again to stand in solidarity with Africa, a continent with which we share not only lasting ties of history and culture but also common aspirations for durable peace and sustainable development for our peoples. My delegation applauds the initiative of African leaders to fashion a new partnership for development on the continent within a framework of democratic governance.

Today, as we review the progress made in the implementation of, and international support for, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), our task is greatly facilitated by the Secretary-General's reports contained in documents A/58/254 and A/58/352. The reports provide an enlightening survey of the progress made, as well as the challenges and constraints encountered. My delegation wishes to place on record its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his reports, as well as its appreciation for his efforts, and those of the entire United Nations system, in support of NEPAD.

Guyana views the New Partnership as a positive agenda for action, not only by and among African countries themselves as the primary actors, but also as one to be embraced by the entire international community. We are heartened by the commitment that the countries of Africa have demonstrated to integrating the priorities of NEPAD into their national policies and development planning frameworks. Guyana holds the view that ownership and leadership of the NEPAD process by Africans is indispensable to the achievement of the objectives of the New Partnership. In that context, my delegation welcomes the establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism and the increasing accession of countries to the Mechanism.

Also to be welcomed and supported are the efforts of the African Union to consolidate democracy on the continent and strengthen regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, resolution and management. The hopeful results in Liberia, Burundi and Sao Tome and Principe are testimonies to both the leadership shown by Africa in addressing problems within its domain and to the growing partnership between regional organizations on the continent and the United Nations. We welcome that development.

We look forward to the entry into force of the protocol to establish the Pan-African Parliament to ensure the effective and full participation of African peoples in the development and integration of the

continent, as well as the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. Efforts being made to reorient the activities of regional communities to reflect the priorities of NEPAD can contribute in a meaningful way to the operationalization of those priorities throughout the continent as a whole.

Notwithstanding the positive developments to which I have referred, Africa continues to face formidable challenges in its pursuit of peace and development. The Secretary-General has drawn attention to several of those challenges as they pertain to sectors such as agriculture and food security, health — in particular the crisis caused by HIV/AIDS — and education. No less daunting are the challenges posed by conflict and instability. Those challenges need to be seriously addressed if the continent is to have any chance of attaining the objectives of the New Partnership.

We also note that the implementation of NEPAD is constrained by a number of shortcomings, not least in the implementation machinery itself. In addition, the Secretary-General also highlights weak institutional capacity at the national and regional levels, insufficient popularizing of NEPAD at the country level and funding inadequacies. In our view, those represent opportunities for further cooperation and support from the international community.

While these challenges and constraints can be overcome, it is clear that doing so will require renewed efforts by the international community to honour its commitments to NEPAD. Concrete actions with respect to the provision of official development assistance, debt relief for Africa, market access for African products, redressing the deterioration of terms of trade for commodity producers and assistance in enabling the continent to attract foreign direct investment remain essential in that regard, with special responsibility devolving on developed country partners. My delegation is appreciative of the positive developments referred to by the Secretary-General on that front, and we call for intensified efforts in support of NEPAD. Equally important is for such efforts to assure a degree of sustainability in the gains achieved wherever possible.

My delegation is also of the view that South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation initiatives, forms an integral and complementary part of the international response to NEPAD. In that regard, we note with appreciation the Secretary-General's acknowledgement of the contribution made by countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean region, among others, in the area of capacity building. At the level of the Caribbean Community, a number of cooperation initiatives have been undertaken with countries and institutions in Africa, including at the level of our respective secretariats. We look forward to continued cooperation in that regard, including the strengthening of our relationship with the continent in the context of the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States. My own country, Guyana, is in the process of reviewing that relationship with a view to strengthening cooperation arrangements with several African countries.

I wish to conclude by renewing my delegation's commitment to lending every possible support that our limited resources will permit to the cause of Africa's renaissance.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): The delegation of Angola would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report contained in document A/58/254, entitled "The New Partnership for Africa's Development: first consolidated report on progress in implementation and international support". It is our view that that report provides useful insight into the progress of implementation with regard to the relevant agenda item.

Resolution 57/2, which was adopted at the previous session, welcomed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as an African initiative that would be supported by the international community at large. The subsequent steps taken by the United Nations, and particularly the adoption of resolution 57/7, on 4 November 2002, gave special momentum to that process. It is that process and impulse that African countries had been expecting for a considerable time.

Despite providing us with important information on the actions taken thus far, the report nevertheless clearly recognizes that de facto results are far from being achieved.

Angola recognizes and commends the relentless work that the United Nations has undertaken with regard to the implementation of NEPAD. We welcome the establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, which is currently chaired by our good friend and friend of my country, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari. We hope that the Office will be well provided with

adequate financial and human resources in order to carry out its mandate promptly and efficiently.

We also commend other United Nations agencies for their collaboration and support for activities that prioritize the implementation of NEPAD. We would especially like to thank the United Nations Development Programme for supporting NEPAD's secretariat in the elaboration of its five-year programme of work. The involvement of the Economic Commission for Africa in fine-tuning the African Peer Review Mechanism also constitutes an important step in the establishment of an institutional framework for mutual accountability and policy coherence in Africa. In the view of our delegation, the cluster approach to deal with that matter constitutes an excellent mechanism to keep the coordination of agencies' efforts alive in their treatment of NEPAD.

In the chapter entitled "Challenges and constraints", the report sheds some light on the difficulties that African countries will face in order to meet the minimum goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration. The report states plainly that

> "Total official development assistance to Africa is modest in comparison with the huge agricultural subsidies paid to farmers in the developed countries. Furthermore, the subsidies depress commodities prices, hindering Africa's ability to increase exports and escape from poverty and dependence on aid." (*A/58/254, para. 36*)

That is an old and well-known problem that the international community, and developed countries in particular, need to address.

Angola is working on a new poverty-reduction strategy paper aimed at improving the macro-economic framework and structural and social policies to foster growth and reduce poverty. The Ministry of Planning in my country is the focal point for matters regarding the implementation of NEPAD at the national level. The Ministry is sparing no efforts in its commitment to honour its responsibilities when it comes to implementation. Angola stands ready to continue its participation in regional and subregional programmes — such as Project Link — that will enhance the capacity of African countries to better respond to the challenges facing NEPAD. We support the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, and we will work closely with all partners in order to bring complete success to NEPAD.

Africa is known as a continent of vast beauty, deep history and rich culture. Africa is, however, a land that continues to struggle with famine, poverty, debt, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and tuberculosis — tragedies that have claimed the lives of millions of people. Armed conflicts constitute the other major cause of death in our continent. We are therefore deeply committed to finding adequate solutions to existing conflicts. We are particularly committed to creating the conditions necessary to avert the situation that Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique — which currently chairs the African Union — referred to when he said that

> "there are no new conflicts on our continent, and even those that now exist are a combination of either old conflicts that have not been resolved properly or seemingly new ones that can be traced back to the old ones." (*supra*)

The recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report provide a clear assessment of the problems and constraints that the majority of the countries of Africa are still facing five years after the publication of the Secretary-General's first assessment on the causes of conflict in Africa. We would especially like to refer to recommendation 57 of the implementation matrix, which demands more effective harmonization of bilateral and international initiatives.

The Secretary-General's report on this matter also points out the need for a more refined reporting mechanism. Angola is of the view that the provision contained in resolution 57/296 — which pertains to the inclusion of a sub-item entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" under a single agenda on the development of Africa, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support", beginning at the fifty-eighth session — constitutes the best solution and should be welcomed. But we need to do much more than just reporting. Effective and coordinated action by the international community is needed. NEPAD offers us a sound opportunity to act together.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Barely a year ago, we held a special high-level session of the General Assembly on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). On that occasion, the international community expressed its full support for that initiative aimed at achieving

Africa's sustainable development. Nevertheless, that much-heralded support has in fact been scarce, and it has not achieved tangible results.

The situation in Africa is increasingly critical. Half of African's population lives in extreme poverty, and one third suffers from starvation. One out of six children dies before the age of five, and 3.6 million children are born underweight. The enrolment rate for elementary education is at 57 per cent, and only one out of every 3 children finishes primary school. Life expectancy at birth in sub-Saharan Africa is barely 48 years of age. Out of the 42 million people infected with HIV/AIDS, 70 per cent live in sub-Saharan Africa and have no access to the medicines and treatments needed to fight the virus, avoid other diseases and ease pain. Age-old diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and other equally deadly ailments have not been overcome. Only 48 per cent of the population has access to drinking water. Of Africa's population over the age of 15, 37.6 per cent are illiterate. Millions of people do not have access to electricity, let alone to a telephone line. There are only 15 telephone lines per 1,000 people in Africa, whereas in industrialized countries, which account for 15 per cent of the world's population, there are 592 telephone lines for every 1,000 inhabitants.

Current international economic relations, which are characterized by the inequalities imposed by the neo-liberal globalization process, leave Africa at a total disadvantage. How can it be said that the globalization process is inclusive and offers opportunities and benefits for all when Africa, which comprises 18.5 per cent of the world's population and has the largest natural resource reserves in the world, accounts for only 1 per cent of gross domestic product and 2 per cent of the world's trade? Is it a coincidence that 34 of the 49 least developed countries are in Africa? Is it a coincidence that 34 out of the 42 heavily indebted poor countries are in Africa? It is obvious that the current unjust and unsustainable international order continues to plunder Africa as a basic source of wealth without bringing it economic development. Africa continues to be a net exporter of capital that exports wealth in excess of the aid and financing it receives.

Moreover, due to those reasons and because of the consequences of colonial partition, there are today more armed conflicts in Africa than in any other continent. That poses a significant challenge to meeting the Millennium Development Goals, as it has devastating effects on the economic and social development of the region. Africa's wisdom deserves respect. Africa does not need more advice or recipes to solve its conflicts; it needs financial resources. Despite what is said in debates and affirmed in numerous resolutions, emphasis continues to be on reacting to conflicts in Africa instead of on preventing them and eliminating their causes.

Various initiatives and proposals related to Africa continue to proliferate at the United Nations, but there is still a lack of political will and altruism on the part of former colonial Powers, as well as a comprehensive approach to solve problems related to peace, security and development on the continent. Neither is there a mechanism at the United Nations that makes it possible to periodically and efficiently monitor the fulfilment of what is agreed.

Africa cannot continue to wait. International cooperation is inescapable, and it is urgently needed. The peoples of Africa need the support of the international community, for the resources at their disposal are insufficient and have to be devoted to paying for both their external debt and development. Africa today spends four times as much on servicing its foreign debt than it does on education and health combined. A small increase in the official development assistance that has been provided to Africa this year with many conditions; debt relief or cancellation initiatives; promises to promote foreign investment and pronouncements regarding reducing agricultural subsidies, which boost agricultural production and exports, continue to be insufficient measures amounting to ridiculous sums when compared to the continent's needs.

African countries urgently require — without interference and conditions — special and differential treatment, access to markets, stability in commodity prices, foreign debt cancellation, access to technology, a substantive increase in official development assistance and the necessary financial resources.

Cuba is a country with limited resources that has been subjected to a fierce economic, commercial and financial blockade for over four decades. That blockade has been strengthened during the last year, and its extraterritorial implementation has been expanded. In the spirit of solidarity, Cuba continues to extend its altruistic and disinterested cooperation to African countries. As an illustration of what can be

accomplished with political will and cooperation that is both disinterested and based on solidarity, I would like to refer to the fact that, between 1963 and 2002, over 83,000 Cubans provided technical assistance in Africa in the areas of health, agriculture, education and sports, among others. By the end of 2002, 2,340 Cuban collaborators were providing technical assistance in 27 African countries. During the same period, over 5,000 of our African brothers and sisters received technical training in various technical fields in our country.

A comprehensive health programme that has been developed since 1998 is the most current example of Cuban cooperation with Africa. Through that programme, Cuban health care professionals and technicians working exclusively in the area of primary care are providing their services free of charge to people living in rural areas. That programme also contributes to training the human resources of receiving countries, to developing HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and to offering technical advice. By the beginning of 2003, 1,148 Cubans were working in the programme in 13 African countries.

I would like once again to reiterate my country's offer to help the brotherly peoples of Africa in the struggle against the AIDS pandemic by sending an additional 4,000 doctors and health professional to create, free of charge, the infrastructure required to provide the population with the essential medicines, diagnoses, medical advice and follow-up. That personnel would also assist in training human resources. Cuba is also offering professors to establish medical school faculties and qualified staff to provide advice and to work in campaigns aimed at preventing AIDS and other diseases. I also wish to reiterate our willingness to donate antiretroviral therapy for 30,000 patients per year.

We should take action on an urgent basis, or the modest Development Goals outlined by the Millennium Declaration will be but an illusion for the peoples of Africa.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.